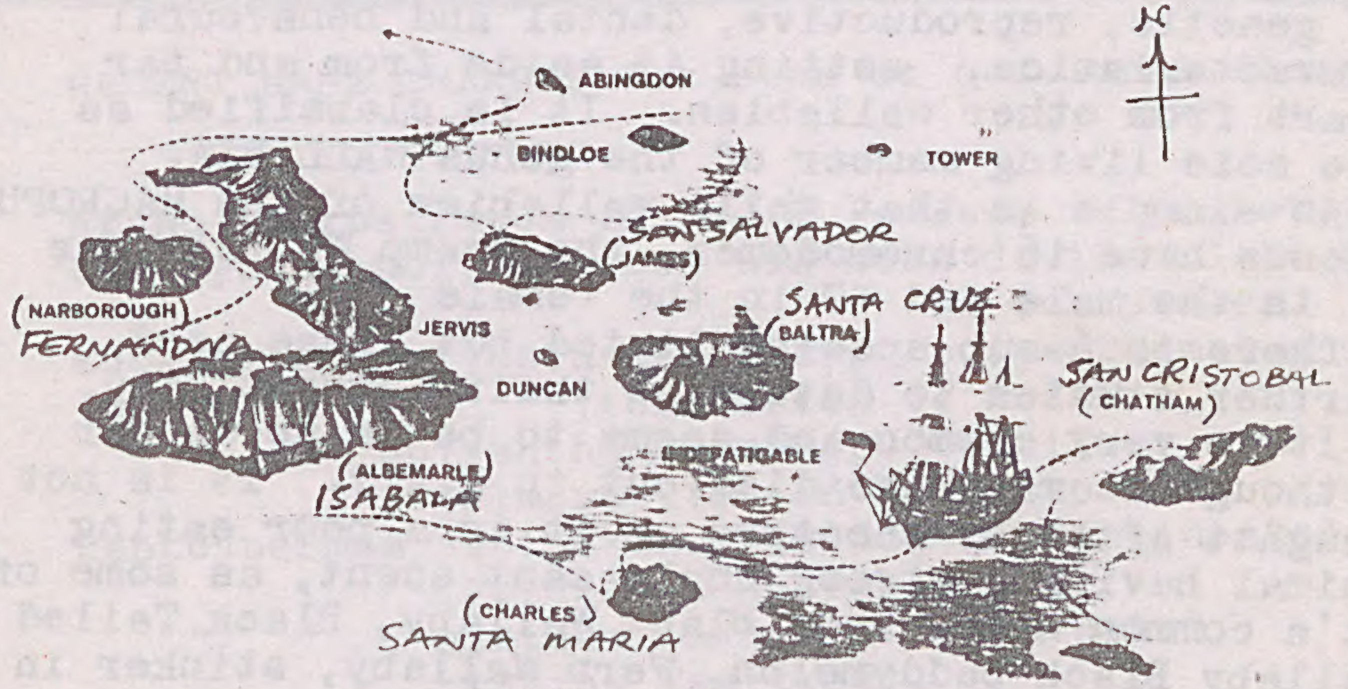
Field Naturalists Club of Ballarat Incorporated.

JULY 5 1991

EXCURSION-NEWS SHEET

Meeting	July 5	Mrs V.Dedman - The Galapagos Islands	
Meeting	August 2	Mr D.Frood - Vegetation of the Western Plains	
Excursion	July 7	Union Jack Reserve	F.Harrap
Excursion	August 4	Moolort Plains	A.Teese
	August 30-September 1	WVFNCA Camp-out Hattah National Park	

ABOARD THE "BEAGLE", DARWIN SPENT FIVE WEEKS EXPLORING THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS



ARCHIPIELAGO DE COLON (ECUADOR)

President	Mr K Hammond	Ph 053 394534
Vice Pres	Mr K McDonnell	326800
Secretary.	Mr J Gregurke	394991
Treasurer:	Mrs F Williamson	327631
Editor:	Mr L Fink	052 861319

Meetings as specified are held at the School of Mines and Industries, Lydiard Street Sth., Art Building, commencing at 7.30 p.m. EXCURSIONS, AS SPECIFIED, COMMENCE FROM CROCKERS, cnr. STURT AND ARMSTRONG STS., BALLARAT, at 9.30 a.m. for FULL DAY OUTINGS OR AT 1.30 p.m. for HALF DAY*

Notes on the Swamp Wallaby. WALLABIA bicolor

This is the most common wallaby seen on our outi outings it is one our most interesting animals.

The Swamp Wallaby has a number of common names as it is found all the way down the Eastern coast of Australia from Cape York peninsular to the S.A. border. It is a medium sized animal app. 755 mm males and 700 mm females, dark brown to black with a light yellow to strong rufus orange below, because of the hairs the tail looks to be without a taper occasionally the tip of the tail is white, it is a common wallaby eating a wide range of herbage from pastures to shrub species.

It breeds throughout the year from 15 - 18 months old with a gestation period of around 36 days the Swamp Wallaby differs from most, if not all, marsupials in having a gestation period longer than the oestrous cycle. The pouch life of the young is completed by 8-9 months but continues to suckle as a young at foot until about 15 months old.

The difference in this wallaby is a combination of genetic, reproductive, dental and behavoural characteristics, setting it aside from and far apart from other wallabies. It is classified as the sole living member of the genus WALLABIA.

An example is that while wallabies of the MACROPUS genus have 16 chromosomes, the Swamp Wallaby has 11 in the male and 10 in the female

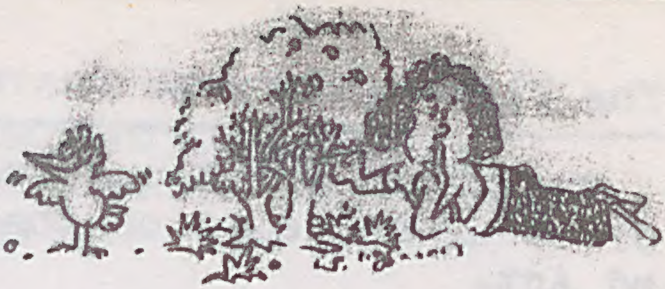
There is 6 sub species listed but these need further studies to determine their authenticity.

It is very common and seems to be in no danger although it may have died out in S.A.?. It is not soughtt after by shooters as it is a poor eating animal having a strong unpleasant scent, as some of it's common names show Black Wallaby, Black Tailed Wallaby Black paddymelon, Fern Wallaby, stinker in Queensland and Black stinker in N.S.W.

Next time you see one remember this is one of our oldest surviving animals.

From The Austr. Museum Complete Book of Australian Mammals.

Field Reports: June Meeting



Harvey Hooper - Told of the conflict in management of a wildlife reserve at Ross Bridge. Grazing has wiped out the saltbush which once grew there; however grazing is necessary for the breeding of a butterfly in the Saw-sedge

- Foxes seen in the urban area of Brown Hill.

Ken McDonnell - Cattle Egret in Springs Road, Brown Hill.

Helen Burgess - Magpie observed jumping over, but ignored by, an Ibis.

Lyndsay Fink - Pair of hawks at Meredith feeding on rats and mice at the tip.

Pat Murphy - Acacia lanigera flowering at Mortchup.

Frank Harrap - Gang-gang Cockatoos are still at Mt Helen and are very tame, are using left foot to feed on berries. Other Mt Helen observations include White's Thrush, Australian Hobby, Black-shouldered Kite and Crimson Rosella.

RECENT NAME CHANGES for some of our local flora.

Eryngium rostratum is now E. ovinum (Blue Devil),
Eucalyptus polyanthemos has been divided into 2 subspecies:
Eucalyptus polyanthemos subsp. polyanthemos (restricted to N.S.W.),
" polyanthemos subsp. vestita (almost limited to Victoria),
Leptospermum juniperinum is now L. continentale (Prickly Tea-tree),
" nitidum is now L. turbinatum (Shiny Tea-tree),
" phylicoides is now Kunzea ericoides (Burgan),
Phragmites communis is now P. communis (Common Reed),
Prasophyllum patens is now P. truncatum (Sweet Leek Orchid),
" archeri is now Genoplesium archeri (Variable Midge Orchid).

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee. Rob Humphries

The Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988 is a piece of Legislation that is quite a long detailed Act.

The main features of the Act are - A new management approach, with emphasis on the developement of a Flora and Fauna guarantee strategy together with specific action statements, Flora and Fauna management plans, and public authority management agreements.

A lasting process, to identify threatened species and potentially threatening processes. This is the first step in conferring additional protection.

Habitat controls, particularly by means of interum conservation orders which are designed to protect the critical habitats of any native flora and fauna, whether listed or not.

Identification of potentially threatening processes, which in the long term, can threaton the survival of and abundance of flora and fauna.

Upgrading of controls over the taking tradind and keeping of native species, especially flora.

The Legislation has broken new ground in two v vitally important areas, power to handle short term term crisis through the interim conservation order which allows immediate action to protect habitat and associated flora and fauna in critical areas.

To adopt a preventitive approach which is backed up by more effective management by placing emphasis on planning, on ground management and prevention rather than legal controls.

The Act covers all vertebrate animals(mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish.)
Invertebrate animals (insects, crustaceans, worms, mol molluscs, corals, Jellyfish, microscopic animal plankton.)
Vascular plants (trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses.)

It does not apply only to threatened species but to all native species.

The Act establishes a mechanism to identify speciesat risk of extinction so that they can be givenextra management attention. This is the listing process.

Any person can nominate any of the following items for listing or delisting.

An individual Taxon.
A community or assembly of plants,
A potentially threatening process.

The scientific advisory council consider each nomination as soon as possible, only Nature conservation factors may be taken into account by the committee in formulating a draft reccommendation which is publicised for comment , at least 30 days are allowed for public comment.

Nominations that have been listed before or are considered to be vexatious or are accompanied with insufficient informatin may be rejected.

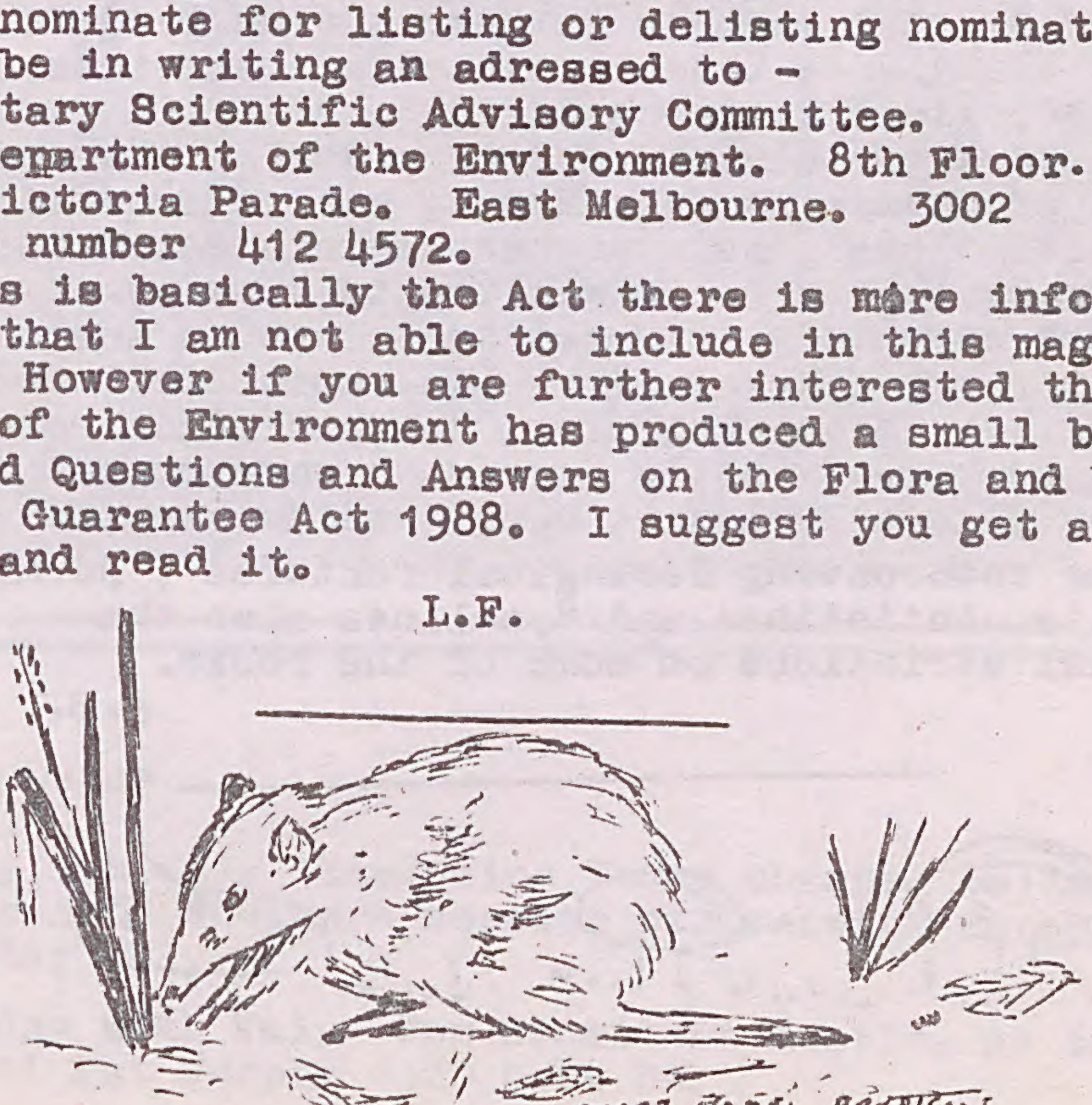
The advisory committee is three senior scientific officers, two scientists from Victorian education and two non government scientists.

To nominate for listing or delisting nominations must be in writing an adressed to -

Secretary Scientific Advisory Committee.
c/o Department of the Environment. 8th Floor.
250 Victoria Parade. East Melbourne. 3002
Phone number 412 4572.

This is basically the Act there is more information that I am not able to include in this magazine. However if you are further interested the Dep. of the Environment has produced a small book called Questions and Answers on the Flora and Fauna Guarantee Act 1988. I suggest you get a copy and read it.

L.F.


SHORT NOSED BANDICOOT.

Excursion to Werribee Gorge State Park Sun. Ju. 4

Thanks to Jack Myers of Bacchus Marsh taking a few of us on a reconnaissance walk, the previous tuesday, we visited some interesting lookouts and had a very enjoyable outing.

The weather was most pleasant and the rain held off until we were safely back at the Cars.

During the morning we climbed steadily until we reached the top of the Gorge from which we had a lovely view right over the Bay to Sorrento.

Lunch was eaten by the river while we rested and gained our strength.

The Afternoon walk followed the river along the water channel that was constructed as an unemployment relief project in 1928, this provided water toBacchus Marsh.

There was a number of lovely sandy beaches and deep swimming holes along the river, a pity it was too cold for any of us to be tempted in.

The highlight for birdwatchers were a pair of Peregrine Falcons seen during the morning walk.

It was great to have Elizabeth's husband John Stayt along - he kindly pointed out someinteresting geological features during the day.

We are keen to visit the area during the next years programme as Jack Myers, who once owned prop property there, has a number of interesting off the track places he is willing to show us.

There were many interesting things to see on our trip- A Black Wallaby (Wallabia bicolour) many birds Golden Whistler, Hoary Headed Grebes, and a number of Cattle Egrets to name some.

Many plants including fungi and Eucalypts.

Some interesting Geological features , Permian tillite, Anticlines and Synclines also the Glacial striations on some of the rocks.

A.B.

Diary Dates.

Sunday 7th July Excursion Venue changed to Invermay area. (Southern section of Creswick Forest.) half day only.

Thursday 25th July 8pm Committee meeting at the home of Pat Murphy 1320 Dana St.

Botanical notes July 1991

FAMILY CYPERACEAE (The Sedge Family)

The family name comes from the Latin, Cyperus, which in turn is from a Greek word for a species of sedge.

These plants are grass-like or rush-like and are usually perennials. The stems are generally solid, sometimes hollow, often triangular in cross section. The leaves are narrow with closed tubular basal sheaths.

The inflorescence is a panicle or head or spike often with several leafy bracts at the base. The flowers are small, bisexual or unisexual with or without a perianth of scales or bristles. The fruit is an indehiscent dry nut, called an achene, sometimes flattened and sometimes trigonous.

The family is found everywhere (i.e. cosmopolitan), provided the site is wet enough. There are about 4000 spp in 90 genera. 650 spp in 47 genera are found in Australia.

In the list of plants found in the Ballarat area Beauglehole gives the common name of some sedges as " such and such rush ". This is, of course, confusing. More study is under way.

Some of the more numerous spp belong to the following genera :-

Carex (Tall Sedge): Flowers in each spikelet unisexual. Leaves grass-like. Nut enclosed in a utrical (loose covering)

Flowers in each spikelet bisexual. Nut never in a utrical.

Cyperus (Flat Sedge) : leaf blade present, often grass-like. Spikelets more than 6 flowered.

Eleocharis (Spike Rush): plant leafless, culm with a terminal spikelet (Lake Wendouree)

Gahnia (Saw Sedge) : Stem solid, long scabrid leaves (minute bristles or hairs)

Lepidosperma (Sword Sedge) : culms from filiform to broad, flat and knife-like.

Schoenus (Bog Rush) and Scirpus (Club Rush) : distinguished by differences in the flowers.

Not many of these attract as much attention as the plants with coloured flowers. Among the Monocotyledons orchids have a fascination and the " grasses " or Poaceae are economically important.

H. H.